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ABSTRACT

The Running Start program was created by the Washington State Legislature in 1990 to allow qualified 11th and 12th grade high school students to take college-level courses at community and technical colleges. In the 1994-95 academic year, 7,418 high school students were enrolled in college classes through the program, representing about 3% of the total high school juniors and seniors in the state. The colleges were reimbursed by K-12 districts at the rate of $75 per credit in academic programs and $96 per credit in vocational programs. The 1994-95 Running Start students had the following characteristics: (1) 68.8% of the participants were attending college full-time; (2) 61% were female and 13% were students of color; (3) 45% were working part-time while attending, while over 2% worked full-time; (4) approximately 85% were taking academic courses; (5) 2% were disabled; (6) the average grade point average of program students was 2.8, slightly above the average entering freshman grade point average; and (7) 202 former participants enrolled in the University of Washington (UW) in fall 1994. Recommendations for program improvement include making additional resources available to high school advanced placement programs and providing counseling for Running Start students. Tables of student demographics, unduplicated headcounts and annual full-time equivalents per district, and program students' characteristics and first year performance at UW for the fall 1994 and 1995 are included. (TGI)

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ED 390 486

RUNNING START

1994-95
Annual Progress Report
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

January 1996

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The Running Start Program

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Running Start

A progress report from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

January 1996

Washington Community & Technical Colleges
The Smart Investment

Background

The Running Start program was created by the 1990 Legislature to expand educational options for public school students. **Running Start allows 11th and 12th grade high school students to take college-level courses, tuition-free, at the 32 community and technical colleges.** Students earn both high school and college credits, with five college quarter credits equal to one high school credit.

The 1994 Legislature expanded Running Start to give several public four-year universities the option to offer the program. The program now includes Washington State University at Pullman, Eastern Washington University at Cheney and Central Washington University at Ellensburg. No existing community or technical college has its main campus in those cities.

Running Start students represent about 3 percent of the total number of full-time juniors and seniors in Washington public high schools.

The Legislature initiated Running Start with a two-year pilot program from 1990-92. Statewide operation began in 1992-93. In the first full year of statewide operation, about 3,508 high school students enrolled full- or part-time at the community and technical colleges. That number increased to more than 7,400 for the 1994-95 year.

Running Start students represent about 3 percent of the total number of full-time juniors and seniors in Washington public high schools. While students attend the colleges free of tuition charges, they must provide their own transportation, books, and supplies.

The Running Start Option

More than 7,400 high school students around Washington state participated in Running Start in 1994-95. By allowing them to earn high school and college credits simultaneously, Running Start has reduced the amount of time they have to spend in school and has held down college costs for students and their families. Also flexibility in class scheduling has enabled Running Start students to meet other commitments for

Running Start Enrollments by College

Academic Year 1994-95

College	Headcount	FTES
Peninsula	194	123
Grays Harbor	100	54
Olympic	181	113
Skagit Valley	445	187
Everett	339	202
District 6		
Seattle Central	242	110
North Seattle	166	83
South Seattle	96	55
Shoreline	153	80
Bellevue	337	191
Highline	133	63
Green River	319	160
Pierce	400	195
Centralia	137	87
Lower Columbia	134	79
Clark	561	260
Wenatchee Valley	153	73
Yakima Valley	214	108
District 17		
Spokane	141	76
Spokane Falls	372	204
Big Bend	252	106
Columbia Basin	192	117
Walla Walla	244	117
Whatcom	493	216
Tacoma	212	115
Edmonds	316	158
South Puget Sound	505	191
Bellingham	82	55
Lake Washington*	3	1
Renton	43	20
Bates*	138	116
Clover Park*	121	96
Total	**7,418**	**3,815**

** Bates, Clover Park, and Lake Washington also offer alternative programs for high school students in addition to Running Start.*

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education, jobs, or family responsibilities.

Students may obtain information about Running Start from their high school counselors or their local college's admissions office. **To participate in Running Start at most colleges, students must pass a standardized test to determine whether they have the skills needed to succeed at college.**

By allowing students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously, Running Start has reduced the amount of time they have to spend in school and has held down college costs for students and their families.

To preserve the college environment for adults while accommodating the younger students, colleges limit the number of Running Start students who may take any one class. Also, colleges have worked to ensure that their registration procedures do not result in Running Start students displacing adults at community and technical colleges. In fact, the enrollment of new Running Start students has enabled colleges to add sections of existing classes, expanding enrollment opportunities for adults as well as Running Start participants.

Funding for Running Start is designed to compensate colleges for the cost of educating K-12 students. Colleges are reimbursed about $75 per credit for academic programs and $95 per credit for vocational programs by K-12 districts whose students participate in Running Start. The K-12 districts retain 7 percent of those funds for administrative overhead and student counseling.

Who participates in Running Start?

Research by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges indicates that **65 percent of Running Start students take 10 or more credits per quarter; 60 percent are female; 12.9 percent are students of color; and 45 percent work part-time while attending college.**

The academic performance of Running Start students—and the support for the program among students and parents—has been very positive. The average grade point of Running Start students is 2.80, about the same as the average of regular community and technical college students. The University of Washington reports that the 202 Running Start students who transferred to the University during fall 1995 have an average grade point of 3.02 and are averaging 14 credits per quarter. And **89 percent of all Running Start students surveyed in 1992 said they would participate again.**

Ongoing issues in Running Start

The Running Start program represents a major departure from traditional educational practices, and has raised the visibility of several issues related to educational funding and students' movement between the K-12 and college systems.

- One of the most significant financial impacts is the savings that result from students earning college and high school credits at the same time. Because K-12 basic education funds are used for Running Start (the K-12 funds "follow the student" to his or her college), high school students are able to attend college tuition-free. **Last year, the program saved students and their families $5 million in college tuition costs. In addition, taxpayers pay only one time to support Running Start students in both the high school and college systems. This "two-for-one" aspect of Running Start saved taxpayers about $12 million in 1994-95.**

- K-12 administrators have expressed concerns that the transfer of students and the shift of funds to the colleges — reflecting the popularity of Running Start — have made it more difficult for some high schools to maintain comprehensive programs, especially in college preparatory courses.

Taxpayers saved about $12 million through the Running Start program last year, and the students who participated saved $5 million in college tuition costs.

The two-year college system is supporting a request to the Legislature by the Superintendent of Public Instruction's office for $2 million in the 1996 supplemental budget to address the financial impact of Running Start in certain K-12 districts. The community and technical colleges support the use of this impact funding in K-12 districts where Running Start has caused clearly identified financial problems for the local high schools.

- Discussions continue over the way college credits are used to satisfy students' high school graduation requirements. Currently, students receive one (1) high school credit for completing five quarter-hours or three semester-hours of college course work. The State Board of Education has proposed to reduce that credit equivalency to three-quarters (0.75) of a credit in order to reduce the attractiveness of Running Start to high school students, but the board has delayed the change until the Legislature has time to consider the $2 million supplemental budget request.

RUNNING START
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
1994-95

SUMMARY

The Running Start Program continues to be a successful program and growth continues to be strong, although at a declining rate from 1993-94. Last year, over 7,400 students enrolled for a total of 3,800 FTEs. This was a growth of about 35 percent from the previous year. Enrollments for Fall 1995, the current year, indicate that enrollments at the original five pilot colleges are leveling off to be more consistent with the general growth of the individual high school population. The high schools of the state are doing an excellent job in preparing these students for advanced placement into the Running Start program.

BACKGROUND

The 1990 Legislature created the Running Start program as a part of the "Learning by Choice" law, which was designed to expand educational options for public high school students. The Running Start portion of the law allows qualified eleventh and twelfth grade students to take college level courses at the 32 community and technical colleges. Running Start students earn both high school and college credits for completing courses at the college level. The 1994 legislature expanded the program to include Eastern, Central and Washington State universities. The intention of the legislature was to provide Running Start program access in the local communities served by these universities and where no two-year colleges were available to directly serve students.

To initiate the program in 1990 the Legislature authorized a two-year pilot program. Five colleges were selected to participate during the 1990-92 academic year (Everett, Pierce, Skagit Valley, South Puget Sound and Walla Walla community colleges). The pilot program also involved 37 high schools within the college service areas. Program enrollments for the first year were 358 students.

The program began statewide in 1992-93 when about 3,500 students enrolled at the community and technical colleges. For 1994-95, about 7,400 headcount students enrolled.

RUNNING START PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Eleventh and twelfth grade students, as defined by the high school and who are qualified for admission, may attend community and technical colleges and three universities free of tuition. However, they must provide their own transportation, books and consumable materials.

For the 1994-95 academic year, colleges were reimbursed at statewide uniform rates by the K-12 districts whose students participate in Running Start. Colleges received about $75 per credit for academic programs and $96 per credit for vocational programs. K-12 districts retain seven percent of the funds for counseling and other overhead. During the pilot program years, reimbursement rates varied by school district according to the rate of reimbursement from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

By allowing students to obtain high school and college credit simultaneously, Running Start reduces the amount of time students spend in school and reduces college costs for students and their families. Dual credit also allows the state to save up to two full years of funding for students enrolled.

Flexibility in scheduling allows Running Start students to meet other commitments for education, jobs, or family responsibilities. For 1994-95, forty-five percent of the students worked part time and two percent worked full time.

Running Start presents a challenging option for qualified students who may perform better in a college setting than in a traditional high school.

Students continue to report that taking classes with regular college students and adults offers a new and challenging experience to learning.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RUNNING START STUDENTS--1994-95

Running Start students for 1994-95, as a group, are very similar to previous years in demographic characteristics.

- Sixty-one percent of the students were female.
- Thirteen percent were students of color.
- The average credit load taken by the students was 8-9 credits per quarter. Sixty-eight percent took ten or more credits in one or more quarters during the 94-95 academic year, but many take one course per quarter with the balance of classes taken in high school.
- Two percent were students with disabilities. (Increased from one percent in 1993-94.)
- Forty-five percent of the students worked part time, and over two percent worked full time.
- Approximately eighty-five percent of the students were enrolled in academic courses, and fifteen percent in vocational or technical programs.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND TRANSFER OUTCOME MEASURES

- The average grade point average of Running Start students is 2.8. This is approximately the same, but slightly above the average entering freshman grade point average.

The University of Washington reports the following information concerning Running Start students who have transferred to the university.

- For Fall quarter 1994, 202 Running Start students enrolled. One hundred fifty-six were female (56 percent). Program students achieved a grade point average of 3.02 That is about the same as entering freshmen at the U of W. The students also took about the same credit load as regular freshmen.

- 45 (22 percent) of the entering UW transfers in the Running Start program were students of color.

- For Fall 1995, 297 Running Start students entered the University of Washington, and 92 (31 percent) are students of color. (See attached university report.)

Considering research, surveys and quarterly meetings of community and technical colleges involved in Running Start, the following information is provided.

- The program continues to be well received by students and parents, as originally found in the 1992 research study.

- The use of uniform statewide reimbursement rates has reduced bookkeeping time considerably. Counseling time and costs are substantially more than those for regular students.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND RELATED ISSUES

Funding Request

High schools that are the most heavily impacted by loss of students who are choosing Running Start report that local high school advanced placement programs are being diminished by the lower number of students participating. This results in fewer options for students who decide to stay full-time at the high school. Some high schools report that they are considering discontinuing their advanced placement programs because of the high per student cost of offering the program to the students who chose to remain. In order to maintain comprehensive high school programs, additional resources are needed.

In addition, the high cost and time spent in counseling Running Start students is not being addressed by the overhead costs retained by the school districts. The dual enrollment nature of Running Start requires intensive counseling by high school and college staff to assure testing, placement and the selection of courses that will meet high school diploma and college degree requirements at the same time.

These unintended consequences limit full endorsement of the program by the K-12 system. The Superintendent of Public Instruction has requested $2 million from the operating budget to address these issues. The request for $2 million is strongly supported by college system representatives as discussed during the preparation of the system's 1996 legislative program.

Credit Equivalency

In 1994-95 the State Board of Education, at legislative request, created a task force to review how higher education credit is applied to high school graduation. The task force recommended that the higher education credit value remain at the current agreement, which is that "five quarter credits or three semester credits are equivalent to one high school credit." The task force also recommended, with equal importance, that the legislature be requested to fund Running Start at a rate to compensate for the added costs of operating the program and assist high schools' advanced placement programs offered in the high school. As a result, the State Board of Education postponed the implementation of the lower credit value of .75 to Fall Quarter 1996 pending 1996 legislative action.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, Running Start continues to be an excellent program option for high school juniors and seniors who are qualified. Parents and students strongly support the program because it expands their educational choices while reducing the time required to complete their education and tuition costs. Many students report that the program offers an additional educational challenge by allowing them to participate in the same classes and learning atmosphere as regular college and adult students. Colleges and the University of Washington report that Running Start student performance is at least equal to the performance of other entering-level freshmen as measured by grade point averages.

The permanent resolution to the credit equivalency question and funding to address the counseling and comprehensive program needs of high schools are needed to maintain support for the program.

RUNNING START UNDUPLICATED HEADCOUNT AND ANNUAL FTES BY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC YEAR 1994-95

	DISTRICT/COLLEGE	UNDUPLICATED HEADCOUNT	ANNUAL FTES
1	Peninsula	194	123.15
2	Grays Harbor	100	54.39
3	Olympic	181	112.67
4	Skagit Valley	445	187.42
5	Everett	339	201.67
6	Seattle District		
	Seattle Central	242	110.48
	North Seattle	166	83.22
	South Seattle	96	54.51
	Seattle Voc Inst	0	0.00
7	Shoreline	153	79.94
8	Bellevue	337	191.05
9	Highline	133	62.97
10	Green River	319	159.65
11	Pierce	400	195.34
12	Centralia	137	87.32
13	Lower Columbia	134	79.06
14	Clark	561	260.31
15	Wenatchee Valley	153	72.87
16	Yakima Valley	214	108.08
17	Spokane District		
	Spokane	141	75.63
	Spokane Falls	372	204.46
18	Big Bend	252	106.24
19	Columbia Basin	192	117.28
20	Walla Walla	244	116.82
21	Whatcom	493	216.45
22	Tacoma	212	115.38
23	Edmonds	316	158.36
24	South Puget Sound	505	190.80
	COMMUNITY COLLEGE TOTAL	7,031	3,525.51
25	Bellingham Tech	82	55.41
26	Lake Washington Tech	3	1.23
27	Renton Tech	43	20.23
28	Bates Tech	138	116.07
29	Clover Park Tech	121	96.22
	TECHNICAL COLLEGE TOTAL	387	289.16
	SYSTEM TOTAL	7,418	3,814.67

(Numbers may not add due to rounding.)

RUNNING START DEMOGRAPHICS
ACADEMIC YEAR 1994-95

(Enrolled in Community and Technical Colleges)

	Number	% of Total
BY GENDER:		
Male	2,860	38.7%
Female	4,526	61.3%
Total Reported	7,386	
BY RACE/ETHNIC:		
Asian	469	6.5%
African American	156	2.2%
Native American	102	1.4%
Hispanic	177	2.4%
White	6,281	86.8%
Other	35	0.5%
International	13	0.2%
Total Reported	7,233	
BY DISABLED:		
Disabled	140	1.9%
Not Disabled	7,278	98.1%
Total	7,418	
BY FT/PT:		
Full-Time	5,103	68.8%
Part-Time	2,315	31.2%
Total	7,418	

Note: If a student was full-time any quarter during the year, he is counted as full-time.

SOURCE: SBCTC Running Start Database for year 94-95 (RS9495.DBF)

Running Start Students
Entering University of Washington
Autumn 1994
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Entering Characteristics

High School GPA		3.64
SAT Total		
	Mean	1111.6
	Range	690 - 1530
SAT Verbal		
	Mean	524.1
	Range	290 - 750
SAT Math		
	Mean	587.5
	Range	360 - 800
ACT		
	Mean	25.9
	Range	20 - 33

Entering Transfer Credits (AA Degrees = 15)

Mean	31.6
Range	4 - 90

UW Performance

		AUT 94	WIN 95	SPR 95
GPA				
	RST	3.02	3.02	3.02
	Freshman	3.03	2.99	2.94
	Community College	3.05	3.00	2.94
Credits (Passed)				
	RST	14	13.9	13.4
	Freshman	13.9	13.8	13.6
	Community College	11.7	10.8	10.2

Continuation Rate

83.7 percent (181/202) enrolled Autumn 1995 for 14.8 average credit load.

Running Start Students
Entering University of Washington
Autumn 1994
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Gender			
	Male	96	47.52%
	Female	106	52.48%
	Total	**202**	**100.00%**
College Class			
	Freshman	192	95.05%
	Sophomore	3	1.49%
	Junior	7	3.47%
Minority Ethnic Distribution			
	African-American	0	0.00%
	Native American	2	0.99%
	Asian-American	36	17.82%
	Hispanic American	7	3.47%
	Ethnic Minority Total	**45**	**22.28%**
Largest Feeder High Schools			
	Meadowlake	8	
	Lake Washington	6	
	Ferndale	6	
	Kentridge	5	
	Marysville	5	
	Rainier Beach	5	
Largest Feeder Community Colleges			
	Bellevue	23	
	Everett	13	
	South Puget Sound	12	
	Edmonds	11	
	Clark	10	
	Shoreline	10	

Running Start Students
Entering University of Washington
Autumn 1995
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Entering Characteristics

High School GPA		3.61
SAT Total		
	Mean	1093.7
	Range	670 - 1490
SAT Verbal		
	Mean	508.8
	Range	230 - 740
SAT Math		
	Mean	584.9
	Range	310 - 800
ACT		
	Mean	24.8
	Range	15 - 34

Entering Transfer Credits

Mean	35.6
Range	3 - 90

Running Start Students
Entering University of Washington
Autumn 1995
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Gender			
	Male	131	43.96%
	Female	167	56.04%
	Total	**298**	**100.00%**
College Class			
	Freshman	297	99.66%
	Sophomore	1	0.34%
	Junior	0	0.00%
Minority Ethnic Distribution			
	African-American	6	2.01%
	Native American	2	0.67%
	Asian-American	74	24.83%
	Hispanic American	10	3.36%
	Ethnic Minority Total	**92**	**30.87%**
Largest Feeder High Schools			
	Lake Washington	10	
	Lakes	9	
	Roosevelt	8	
	Inglemoor	8	
	Rainier Beach	7	
	Bellingham	7	
	Sehome	7	
	Wenatchee	7	
	Curtis	7	
Largest Feeder Community Colleges			
	North Seattle	7	
	Bellevue	6	
	Whatcom	5	
	Clark	3	
	Everett	3	
	Spokane Falls	3	